

Contract is Funded by U.S. Department of Energy
November 16, 2009

WASHINGTON- U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.) and Congressman Charlie Melancon (La.-03) today congratulated Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana, on being awarded a \$1,903,000 contract from the Department of Energy to research clean energy. The contract will support Nicholls' work over the next three years as part of the Clean Power and Energy Research Consortium in Louisiana.

"We fought to secure these funds for Louisiana's cutting-edge research universities so that we can ensure that our state, long an energy leader for the nation, continues to be a leader by developing the innovative alternative fuels of tomorrow, " said Sen. Landrieu.

"Through this important research, Nicholls State University and CPERC are creating a path to energy independence for Louisiana and our nation," Congressman Melancon said. "Discovering new uses for sugarcane biomass may open up a profitable new market for our farmers and expand the field of renewable energy production in Louisiana."

The research at Nicholls focuses primarily on generating ethanol from sugarcane waste. Sugarcane is a major crop in southeast Louisiana, and every year millions of tons of residues are produced, which are renewable resources. This research seeks to find an economical way to produce ethanol from these residues, providing a renewable energy source and an alternative to open air burning of agricultural residues.

"This funding is essential for the development of green renewable energy in southeast Louisiana. Nicholls is ideally located in terms of conventional fossil energy as well as green energy sources," said Dr. Ramaraj Boopathy, distinguished service professor of biological sciences and principle investigator of the CPERC grant. "This funding from the Department of Energy will help us develop the appropriate technology, which in turn will help the economy and communities of southeast Louisiana. I would like to personally thank Congressman Melancon and Senator Mary Landrieu for helping us secure this vital funding for our research."

"Nicholls is grateful for this grant from the Department of Energy," Dr. David Boudreaux, vice president for institutional advancement, said. "In addition to teaching and service, our university's mission includes research, so of course the CPERC grant is most welcome - and necessary - as we strive to fulfill our mission. I commend Dr. Boopathy for his valuable research, and I thank our legislators in Washington for their continued support of Nicholls State University."

CPERC's research activities focus on technologies to promote greater efficiencies, lower emissions and effective use and production of alternative fuels, including biofuels, to reduce U.S. dependency on foreign energy sources. Nicholls is leading this effort, in coordination with Louisiana State University (LSU), University of New Orleans (UNO), Tulane University, Southern University and the University of Louisiana-Lafayette.

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